

Message Text

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN OP-ED PAGE
WASHINGTON POST WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, HEADED "CRUISING
TOWARD DETENTE."

2. APPARENT ACCEPTANCE BY PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER OF THE
BREZHNEV-KISSINGER EXPLANATION FOR WHY A SALT II AGREE-
MENT WAS NOT SIGNED THIS YEAR POINTS TO PRECISELY THE
SAME COURSE THAT HARD-LINERS HAD FEARED IF PRESIDENT
FORD WERE ELECTED.

3. IN A CBS INTERVIEW NOV. 29, CARTER BLAMED THE
STALLED STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS (SALT) ON "AN
INCOMPATIBILITY AMONG THE (FORD) CABINET OFFICERS" AND
ELECTION-YEAR POLITICS. LIKE LEONID BREZHNEV AND HENRY
KISSINGER, THE PRESIDENT-ELECT DID NOT MENTION SOVIET
REFUSAL TO BUDGE AN INCH ON CRITICAL POINTS.

4. THIS POSITION ON SALT, PLUS A FRIENDLIER ATTITUDE
TOWARD DETENTE BY PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER THAN WAS SHOWN
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BY CANDIDATE CARTER, AND THE NAMES NOW FALLING INTO

PLACE AS HIS NATIONAL SECURITY TEAM, ADD UP TO A

POSITIVE REACTION TO THE KREMLIN.S NEW PEACE OFFENSIVE. THE FIRST STEP COULD BE EARLY NEGOTIATION OF A SALT II AGREEMENT ALONG THE LINES OF ONE PUSHED BY SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER AND CHAIRMAN BREZHNEV AND OPPOSED BY THE FORD DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY (ACDA).

5. ALL THIS IS MADE LESS THAN CERTAIN BY CARTER.S WILLINGNESS TO DOUBLE-REVERSE ANY ISSUE, PARTICULARLY ONE WHERE HE IS A NOVICE. MOREOVER, THE FRACTION OF HARD-LINE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS WILL TRY TO SLOW DOWN CARTER. NEVERTHELESS, CURRENT EVIDENCE INDICATES THE PRESIDENT-ELECT IS MOVING SLIGHTLY LEFT IN FOREIGN POLICY AS HE IS MOVING SLIGHTLY RIGHT IN DOMESTIC POLICY.

6. AT ISSUE ARE TWO NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED UNDER THE SALT II UNDERSTANDING AT VLADIVOSTOK: THE SOVIET BACKFIRE BOMBER AND THE U.S. CRUISE MISSILE. TYPICALLY, THE RUSSIANS WANT AN AGREEMENT PERMITTING UNLIMITED BACKFIRE PRODUCTION AND VIRTUALLY CURTAILING THE CRUISE MISSILE.

7. INDEED, HAD PRESIDENT FORD WON, HE AND KISSINGER WERE READY TO PUSH JUST SUCH A TREATY, SPRUCED UP BY SOME FACE-SAVERS. CARTER.S CAMPAIGN STATEMENTS, WHILE CRYPTIC, SUGGESTED HE MIGHT SACRIFICE THE CRUISE MISSILE -- PERHAPS TOO SEVERE A LOSS FOR THE U.S. ARSENAL -- BUT ONLY IN RETURN FOR THE BACKFIRE BOMBER ALSO BEING INCLUDED UNDER THE STRATEGIC WEAPONS LIMIT.

8. CARTER.S COMMENTS TO WALTER CONRKITE NOV. 29 REPRESENT A SHIFT. ASKED ABOUT UNPLEASANT SURPRISES IN TRANSITION BRIEFINGS, CARTER REPLIED SOMEWHAT UNRESPONSIVELY BUT MOST SIGNIFICANTLY: "THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN SALT BECAUSE OF AN INCOMPATIBILITY AMONG THE CABINET OFFICERS AND THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE ... I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT THE ELECTION YEAR IN OUR COUNTRY IS A TIME FOR DELAY, AND FOR AN ABSENCE OF COMMITMENT."
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MENT TO THE RESOLUTION OF A PROBLEM."

9. CRONKITE NEXT POSED A REMARKABLE QUESTION: "HAVE YOU LEARNED ANYTHING THAT WOULD GIVE YOU CAUSE TO BELIEVE THE SOVIET UNION HAS AS MUCH RIGHT TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF US AND OUR MOTIVES AS WE HAVE TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF THEM?"

10. INSTEAD OF SNAPPING BACK A FLAT NO, CARTER PAUSED

AND SAID, "I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION,"
THEN, AGAIN UNRESPONSIVELY BUT SIGNIFICANTLY, REVEALED

HE HAD ASKED KISSINGER WHETHER THE RUSSIANS HAD EVER
LIED TO HIM. "AND HE SAID NO," CARTER REPORTED, ADDING:
"I KNOW THAT ONE MAJOR FALSEHOOD COULD PRECIPITATE AN
INTERNATIONAL CRISIS, BUT TO KNOW THAT HAS NEVER OCCURED
IN SECRETARY KISSINGER.S EXPERIENCE IS A VERY ENCOURAG-
ING THING."

11. THIS EXTRAORDINARY EXCHANGE REFLECTS KISSINGER.S
FABLED PERSUASIVENESS. ONE OF MANY INSTANCES WHERE,
CONTRARY TO KISSINGER, THE SOVIETS DID NOT TELL THE
TRUTH DIRECTLY AFFECTS SALT. BREZHNEV.S CLAIM OF A
1,000-MILE RANGE FOR THE BACKFIRE BOMBER IS ONE-THIRD
THE SOFTEST-LINE CIA ESTIMATES; THE MORE ACCURATE RANGE
MAY BE 6,000 MILES.

12. CARTER WAS REACTING FAVORABLY TO THE KREMLIN.S
PEACE OFFENSIVE. THE MESSAGE THAT MOSCOW PLANS NO
"TEST" FOR THE NEW PRESIDENT BUT WANTS TO PURSUE DETENTE
WAS CARRIED TO HIM BY SUCH DISPARATE COURIERS AS AVERELL
HARRIMAN, 85-YEAR-OLD DEMOCRATIC PIONEER FOR DETENTE,
AND WILLIAM SIMON, REPUBLICAN SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

13. WHEREAS FORD-KISSINGER DESIRES FOR A SOFT-LINE SALT
II AGREEMENT WERE OPPOSED AT THE PENTAGON BY DR. JAMES
SCHLESINGER AND LATER BY DONALD RUMSFELD, THERE MAY BE
NO SUCH COUNTERWEIGHT IN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. DR.
HAROLD BROWN OF CAL TECH, FRONT-RUNNER TO BECOME SECRE-
TARY OF DEFENSE, IS AN ARDENT ARMS CONTROLLER AND FOE OF
THE CRUISE MISSILE. SECRETARY OF STATE-DESIGNATE CYRUS
VANCE IS NOT RENOWNED FOR SWIMMING UPSTREAM.
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14. SCHLESINGER RETURNING AS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE COULD
COUNTERACT ALL THIS. BUT THAT PROSPECT APPEARS EBBING,
WITH MORE TALK TODAY OF SCHLESINGER BECOMING INTELLI-
GENCE CHIEF. EVEN IN THAT LESS INFLUENTIAL POST, HE
COULD INSURE THAT THE NEW PRESIDENT RECEIVES UNADORNED
INTELLIGENCE ABOUT THE SOVIETS THAT COULD INHIBIT WHAT
IS BECOMING A MAD RUSH BACK TO DETENTE. END TEXT. ROBINSON

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